The Manufacture of Deviance 2.0: The Economic Policy of Online Atrocities

From the Medieval Scaffold to the Algorithmic Spectacle: How Violence, Taboo and Human Suffering Became Digital Currency

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Abstract

This article develops the concept of the "Manufacture of Deviance* 2.0" as an extension of the economic model proposed in The Economic Policy of Online Media: Manufacture of Dissent. It argues that the transition from traditional mass media to decentralised digital platforms has produced not simply a transformation in the distribution of violent imagery, but a new economic relationship between attention, taboo and atrocity. Traditional broadcast media developed institutional and ethical mechanisms intended to restrict representations of real torture, mutilation and death. The online attention economy partially reverses this logic: what is forbidden, disturbing, transgressive or difficult to access can acquire additional informational value precisely because of its exceptional character. As audiences become saturated with conventional news, entertainment and political controversy, increasingly extreme material can compete successfully for the scarce resource of human attention. Violence consequently becomes capable of generating multiple currencies simultaneously: advertising value, subscriptions, donations and cryptocurrency, but also views, followers, notoriety, group membership, prestige and social recognition. The article traces a genealogy from the spectacle of public punishment and execution, through the controversial appearance of uncensored atrocity footage on traditional television, to gore communities, extremist propaganda, cartel execution videos, closed social-media groups and contemporary networks of digitally performed vigilantism. Particular attention is given to the evolution of so-called "pedophile hunter" subcultures associated with Maxim "Tesak" Martsinkevich and Occupy Pedophilia, in which humiliation and violence could be transformed into reproducible performances possessing recognisable scripts, symbols and gestures. Rather than assuming the existence of a single organisation commissioning such violence, the article proposes a more disturbing possibility: networked media can reproduce violent behaviour without central command because attention, imitation, belonging and social currency themselves operate as incentives. Against this background, the article examines the 2026 Youth Hill case in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, involving teenagers accused of participating in the fatal assault and humiliation of a 37-year-old man after he had allegedly been lured to a meeting. The case is treated cautiously, distinguishing established information, prosecutorial allegations and media reporting from the

broader theoretical interpretation developed here. It nevertheless provides a disturbing case through which to investigate the migration of violent spectacle from the screen into physical behaviour and its subsequent return to the screen as content. The article argues that this process resembles, in technologically transformed form, the public scaffold: the condemned sinner, the righteous crowd, ritual humiliation and spectacular punishment return within a global digital square in which spectators can simultaneously watch, judge, distribute and reward the spectacle. The Manufacture of Deviance 2.0 therefore describes a potentially advanced stage of the attention economy: not merely the monetisation of disagreement and outrage, but the conversion of transgression, cruelty and ultimately human suffering into communicative value.

Keywords

Manufacture of Deviance 2.0; economic policy of online media; attention economy; online atrocities; digital violence; normalisation of deviance; transgression; social currency; algorithmic spectacle; vigilantism; pedophile hunters; Maxim "Tesak" Martsinkevich; Occupy Pedophilia; online radicalisation; gore culture; public punishment; digital medievalism; social media; TikTok; Telegram; Plovdiv; Youth Hill

***** *"Manufacture of Deviance 2.0" is used in this article as a new theoretical extension of Walter D. Connor's earlier concept of the "manufacture of deviance". Whereas Connor analysed the institutional production and labelling of political deviants during the Soviet purges, Manufacture of Deviance 2.0 describes a decentralised digital economy in which deviance, transgression, humiliation and potentially atrocity themselves acquire attention value and can consequently become reproducible forms of content.*

Foreword: From the Manufacture of Deviance to the Global Civil Cold War

In 1972, American sociologist Walter D. Connor published "The Manufacture of Deviance: The Case of the Soviet Purge, 1936–1938," using the Stalinist purges to examine a disturbing sociological possibility: power does not simply discover deviants already existing within society; under particular conditions, it actively produces them by defining, labelling and recruiting individuals into categories of enemies, saboteurs and outsiders. Connor was writing within the intellectual landscape of the Cold War and about an extraordinarily centralised political system. Half a century later, the Soviet Union has disappeared and the bipolar Cold War belongs to history, but the manufacture of deviance has hardly disappeared with it. It has migrated from the centralised political machine into the decentralised architecture of global online communication. What once required a state apparatus capable of naming the Enemy can now emerge simultaneously from millions of interconnected users, movements, influencers, channels, platforms and algorithmically amplified communities. The result might be described as a global ideological Civil Cold War: not two blocs confronting one another, but potentially everyone against everyone, continuously discovering, labelling and exposing new deviants. The enemy may be a "fascist", "communist", "traitor", "terrorist", "globalist", "Nazi", "woke extremist", "Russian agent", "Western agent", "groomer" or "pedophile"; the labels change, while the underlying mechanism remains remarkably familiar. Yet Manufacture of Deviance 2.0 introduces an additional economic dimension absent from Connor's original model. Online,

identifying the enemy can itself generate attention, status, followers and money. The righteous cause becomes simultaneously an ideology and a media product. In this new Civil Cold War, everyone can become prosecutor, propagandist and broadcaster, while the smartphone supplies a permanent tribunal before an invisible global crowd. The frightening inversion of the old Dostoevskian proposition therefore becomes increasingly relevant: if there is a God—if there is an absolutely righteous cause—then everything may appear permitted.

Introduction — When Atrocity Becomes Content

The history of mass communication can also be written as a history of what society permits itself to see. For much of the twentieth century, professional journalism constructed boundaries around representations of the dead and the dying: mutilated bodies were concealed, executions were shortened or removed, victims were anonymised, and the most graphic images of war, murder and torture were generally treated as material requiring exceptional editorial justification. These boundaries were never absolute, and television repeatedly violated them, but violation itself demonstrated that a boundary existed. The digital environment has progressively reversed this relationship. What traditional media regarded as unsuitable for publication can become particularly valuable online precisely because it is unsuitable. The forbidden image possesses scarcity value. The censored video promises something unavailable through ordinary channels. The disturbing clip competes successfully against an informational environment already saturated with conventional news, entertainment, advertising and political controversy. In this sense, the contemporary circulation of gore, humiliation, torture and real death should not be understood exclusively as a problem of declining morality or inadequate content moderation. It is also an economic problem. If attention is scarce, whatever captures attention acquires value; and if ordinary material progressively loses its capacity to capture it, transgression itself becomes a competitive resource. The economic policy of online media therefore contains an escalation mechanism: information competes with controversy, controversy with outrage, outrage with humiliation, and simulated violence eventually with the greater authenticity and shock of actual human suffering. The crucial transformation occurs when atrocity ceases merely to document an event and becomes content produced because somebody expects it to be watched. The word “deviance” is particularly useful for describing this transformation because its deeper linguistic history preserves the image of departure from a road: from Latin via, the way or path, and deviare, to turn away from that path. Sociologically, however, deviance is never simply an intrinsic property of an action. Howard Becker’s classic formulation of labelling theory shifted attention towards the social processes through which communities construct rules, identify their violation and designate particular individuals as outsiders. Walter D. Connor subsequently used the striking expression “the manufacture of deviance” in his analysis of the Soviet purges, demonstrating how institutions could actively construct categories of deviants rather than merely discover people who already belonged to them. The concept proposed here—Manufacture of Deviance 2.0—moves the problem into a different historical environment. Digital media do not require a Stalinist institution, central censor or Ministry of Deviance to manufacture the deviant. The process can become distributed. Millions of users, creators, recommendation systems, private groups and semi-hidden networks can continuously negotiate what is forbidden, what is shocking and therefore what is valuable. Deviance becomes not merely a label attached to an individual but a category of content. More importantly, the person identified as deviant can become the raw material from which

spectacular content is produced. The “pedophile hunter” phenomenon demonstrates the disturbing implications of this reversal particularly clearly: accusation supplies moral legitimacy, humiliation supplies spectacle, violence supplies intensity, recording supplies reproducibility, and the network supplies an audience. The available source material describes precisely this combination of staged encounters, filming, humiliation and increasingly violent confrontation.

This development suggests a darker extension of the economic argument previously described as the manufacture and monetisation of dissent. The currencies of online communication are not limited to money. A video may produce advertising income, subscriptions, donations or cryptocurrency, but it may equally generate followers, notoriety, membership, reputation, ideological status and the less tangible but enormously powerful currency of belonging. This distinction matters because no central conspiracy is necessary. A teenager does not have to receive an envelope of money to behave economically inside an attention market. Recognition itself can function as payment. The Tesak-inspired vigilante phenomenon is useful precisely because the available material describes a decentralised environment in which recognisable performances, symbols and scripts can circulate through imitation and network prestige rather than through a single command structure. The smartphone consequently performs an extraordinary historical compression: camera, broadcasting station, distribution network, audience meter and potential marketplace are concentrated within the same object held by the participant. The 2026 killing on Youth Hill in Plovdiv provides the case study through which this argument will be tested rather than presumed. According to the material assembled for this study, teenagers are accused of involvement in the fatal assault of a 37-year-old man who had allegedly been lured to the hill through online communication; reporting cited in the source material also describes filming, prolonged humiliation and violence. These facts and allegations must remain analytically separate from any interpretation of motive, ideological influence or monetisation that has not been demonstrated by investigators or the courts. Yet the case raises a larger question that does not depend upon proving that somebody was literally paid for a particular video. What happens when the medieval relationship between transgression, punishment and spectacle encounters the economic architecture of networked media? The scaffold once required an executioner, an authority and a crowd assembled in the town square. The digital spectacle requires only a victim, a smartphone and a network. The disturbing possibility examined in this article is that the old public theatre of cruelty has not simply returned. It has acquired metrics, infinite reproducibility and multiple forms of currency. The medieval square has become an interface.

Part I — The Return of the Medieval Square: From Censored Atrocity to the Economy of the Taboo

Modern civilisation did not abolish the spectacle of cruelty; it progressively removed it from legitimate public view. Michel Foucault famously opened Discipline and Punish with the spectacular execution of Robert-François Damiens in 1757 because the scene represented a political technology that modernity supposedly abandoned: punishment performed before an audience upon the visible body. Torture, dismemberment, branding and execution were not merely methods for eliminating or disciplining offenders. They were public rituals. The condemned body became a medium through which authority communicated, while the crowd

transformed punishment into spectacle. Modern institutions gradually replaced this theatre of bodily suffering with prisons, bureaucratic procedures and punishment hidden behind institutional walls. Twentieth-century mass media inherited something of this modern restraint. Television could report murder without showing the corpse, describe torture without broadcasting its entirety, and announce an execution without requiring the audience to witness every physical consequence. The important point is not that television was free from violence—it clearly was not—but that professional gatekeepers maintained a distinction between reporting atrocity and exhibiting atrocity. When that distinction collapsed, scandal frequently followed. Bulgaria provides an instructive historical episode. In 2000, Bulgarian National Television became embroiled in controversy after graphic footage involving the killing of a Russian soldier during the Chechen conflict reached the screen. The source material for this article records the episode as a major violation of prevailing broadcasting expectations and an example of the radically different gatekeeping environment of the period. What matters here is precisely the scandal. The public reaction demonstrated that seeing could still constitute a transgression separate from knowing that violence had occurred.

The internet progressively destroys this distinction because it changes the economics of the forbidden image. Under conditions of informational abundance, prohibition can create value. If almost everything ordinary is instantly available, what is difficult to find becomes attractive precisely through its exclusion. The traditional editor says that an image cannot be shown because it is too disturbing; the networked environment can transform the same warning into an advertisement: this is the image that television will not show. Atrocity consequently enters what might be called an economy of the taboo. War executions, extremist propaganda, prison abuse, fatal accidents, cartel torture and other graphic recordings circulate not despite their transgressive character but partly because of it. Every removed clip can be copied; every closed page can generate another group; every moderation boundary can encourage migration towards less regulated environments. The history described in the source material—from closed Facebook and Messenger communities towards newer platform ecosystems—illustrates the importance of these semi-private environments. The Bulgarian “Shkembe Chorba” example is particularly suggestive, although its precise history and scale require independent documentation before strong empirical claims can be made. The source describes a youth-oriented environment in which disturbing imagery and extreme humour allegedly circulated beyond the visibility of ordinary public feeds. The significance of such communities is not simply that teenagers encountered violence. Humans encountered representations of violence long before Facebook. What changes is the social context in which viewing becomes a performance of identity: the capacity to watch without turning away can become evidence of toughness, sophistication, belonging or resistance to the supposedly sanitised world of adults.

This is where desensitisation intersects with social currency. Repetition can diminish the exceptional character of an image, forcing the attention economy towards escalation. What initially produces disgust can become familiar; what becomes familiar loses competitive power; what loses competitive power must be replaced by something more intense. The movement from fictional violence to real gore, from viewing humiliation to participating in humiliation, or from watching atrocity to producing it should never be treated as an automatic causal sequence—most viewers of violent material obviously do not become violent perpetrators. Yet digital networks create something historically distinctive: they allow spectatorship and production to occupy the same technological environment. The viewer possesses the same smartphone camera, editing applications and distribution channels as the creator. The distance

between consuming a transgressive spectacle and manufacturing one has therefore become remarkably small.

The resulting structure resembles the medieval square while radically exceeding it. Public punishment once required physical proximity. A crowd travelled to the scaffold and disappeared when the spectacle ended. Digital cruelty is geographically liberated and potentially permanent. A humiliation performed in Plovdiv can be watched elsewhere within seconds, copied after deletion, reframed through ideology and circulated among people who never encounter either perpetrator or victim. The crowd no longer merely witnesses. It comments, ranks, shares, rewards and sometimes demands escalation. The scaffold thus acquires a feedback mechanism. This is the first step towards the Manufacture of Deviance 2.0. Modernity moved torture away from the public square; mass broadcasting placed atrocity behind editorial gates. Networked media reopen the gate by making the forbidden economically and socially distinctive. The result is not simply a return to medieval cruelty. It is the emergence of something the medieval executioner never possessed: a global marketplace in which the spectacle of suffering can continuously measure its own popularity.

Part II — Angry People Click More, Horrified People Click More: The Economic Policy of Online Atrocities

The economic logic behind the Manufacture of Deviance 2.0 begins with a simple extension of the argument developed in The Economic Policy of Online Media: Manufacture of Dissent: if anger attracts attention, horror can attract it as well. The decisive commodity of online media is not information itself but measurable human attention. Information exists in practically unlimited quantities, while the time available to consume it remains finite. Every creator, platform, channel, influencer, political movement and anonymous account therefore competes within the same increasingly saturated marketplace. Under these conditions, the extraordinary possesses an advantage over the ordinary, conflict over agreement, scandal over normality and, at the extreme boundary, atrocity over representation. This does not mean that platforms consciously desire torture or murder. The argument is more structural and therefore more troubling: a system organised around measurable engagement can remain morally indifferent to why something attracts attention. A click generated by admiration and a click generated by disgust enter the metric as clicks. Fear, fascination, anger, sexual curiosity and horror may be psychologically different experiences, yet all can be converted into viewing time, comments, shares, subscriptions and repeated visits. The earlier formula “angry people click more” can therefore be extended into a darker proposition: horrified people click more too. Once this principle enters a competitive environment, the economic policy of manufactured dissent can mutate into an economic policy of manufactured transgression. This produces what might be described as an escalation imperative. Every successful violation of a boundary contributes to weakening that boundary. The shocking becomes familiar, the familiar becomes banal, and the banal loses attention. Consequently, the competition for visibility continually searches for another threshold. The sequence is neither universal nor mechanically causal, but its economic direction is recognisable: information can escalate into controversy; controversy into outrage; outrage into humiliation; humiliation into transgression; transgression into violence; and representations of violence into the apparently unsurpassable authenticity of actual suffering. Real gore has a peculiar competitive advantage within this economy because it offers something

fictional entertainment cannot: the knowledge that the body on the screen is genuinely vulnerable and that the event cannot be reversed when the recording ends. This transforms the victim into an extreme form of content asset. The suffering body produces communicative scarcity because authentic death cannot be infinitely manufactured by conventional entertainment without ceasing to be authentic. The paradox of online atrocity is therefore brutal: the very ethical reason an image should possess no commercial value can become the reason it possesses exceptional attention value.

"Profit," however, must be understood beyond conventional monetary exchange. Online environments operate through several overlapping currencies: advertising revenue, subscriptions, donations, cryptocurrency and paid access coexist with followers, likes, views, reputation, notoriety, ideological prestige, membership and belonging. A violent performance therefore does not need to generate a bank transfer to function economically. Social currency can be sufficient compensation. For adolescents especially, recognition by a desired group can possess greater immediate value than money. The source material concerning contemporary "pedophile hunter" networks is useful here because it distinguishes a centralised commissioning system from a decentralised ecology of imitation, crowdfunding, audience rewards and symbolic affiliation. This distinction is essential. The thesis of Manufacture of Deviance 2.0 does not require a hidden headquarters paying teenagers around the world to commit atrocities. Indeed, the absence of such a headquarters demonstrates the novelty of the system. The network itself can coordinate behaviour through visibility, imitation and reward. The genealogy surrounding Maxim "Tesak" Martsinkevich and Occupy Pedophilia provides an especially disturbing model of this process. Vigilante performances transform accusation into narrative and punishment into spectacle. A suspected "pedophile" is not merely confronted; the confrontation can be staged for an imagined audience. The camera fundamentally changes the event because humiliation now has two recipients: the physical victim and the invisible crowd. Repeated formats, gestures, slogans and visual symbols make the performance recognisable and reproducible. The source material identifies the bent-thumb gesture with the Tesak subculture and describes the wider circulation of a recognisable vigilante script. Such symbols operate almost like trademarks within an informal economy of transgression: they identify the performance with a community, connect local actors to a wider mythology and tell knowledgeable spectators how the images should be interpreted.

The accusation of paedophilia is particularly powerful because it supplies an almost perfect moral licence for spectacular cruelty. Once a person has been successfully labelled as the embodiment of absolute evil, ordinary prohibitions against humiliation and violence can appear suspended. Here Becker's sociology of labelling acquires a terrifying digital inversion. The label does not merely exclude the deviant from society; it can transform the labelled individual into legitimate material for content production. Whether the accusation has been judicially established becomes secondary to the spectacle. The camera wants a villain before the law has determined whether one exists. Manufacture of Deviance 2.0 therefore describes an economy without a necessary central manufacturer. The medieval ruler ordered the spectacle; the television editor selected the image; the digital network can produce spectacle through distributed incentives alone. Nobody needs to command, "Make the next atrocity more extreme." Metrics can communicate the instruction silently. What receives attention becomes visible; what becomes visible becomes imitable; what becomes imitable becomes a format; and what becomes a successful format invites escalation. At that point the economic policy of online media reaches its darkest frontier: human suffering no longer merely enters the news because

something terrible happened. Something terrible can become valuable because it can enter the feed.

Part III — Murder for the Algorithm: Youth Hill and the Manufacture of Deviance 2.0

The killing on Youth Hill in Plovdiv in 2026 provides a disturbing case through which the preceding argument can be examined, but it must be approached with an important methodological distinction. A criminal investigation can establish actions, participants, communications and legal responsibility; it does not automatically establish the broader cultural meaning assigned to those facts by media theory. Nor should an accusation made against a victim retrospectively become a fact simply because perpetrators believed, repeated or recorded it. According to the material assembled for this article, a 37-year-old man was allegedly lured to Youth Hill through online communication involving a profile representing a teenage girl, where a group of minors confronted him. The available reporting describes prolonged violence, humiliation and filming, followed by injuries from which the victim died. The same source material states that investigators had not established evidence supporting the claim that the victim had committed an offence against children. This distinction is fundamental. The sociologically significant fact is not whether the label "pedophile" was true, but what the label permitted the group to do once it had been accepted as true within its own constructed reality. Deviance was first attributed to a person; punishment could then be represented as righteous action. The case becomes still more significant if the reported visual references to Maxim "Tesak" Martsinkevich and the violent vigilante subculture surrounding Occupy Pedophilia are substantiated. The source material connects the bent-thumb gesture to this genealogy and describes the circulation of recognisable "pedophile hunter" performances involving entrapment, confrontation, humiliation and recording. The importance of such signs is easily underestimated by institutions accustomed to interpreting youth culture through conventional political organisations. Digital subcultures do not necessarily require membership cards, manifestos or formal leadership. A gesture can function as a hyperlink between physical behaviour and an online mythology. A teenager in Plovdiv can reproduce an aesthetic developed elsewhere without ever belonging to an organised Bulgarian branch of anything. The network distributes scripts rather than commands: whom to identify as an enemy, how to confront that enemy, how to perform the confrontation before a camera and how to signal membership to viewers who understand the code. This is precisely why claims of direct organisational coordination or payment should not be made without evidence. The more consequential possibility is decentralised reproduction. A cultural format can travel farther than an organisation.

Youth Hill therefore exposes a profound conflict between official culture and environmental culture. Ministries, schools, public broadcasters and child-protection organisations may continue to imagine themselves as major institutions of socialisation while adolescents spend substantial portions of everyday life inside environments that those institutions barely observe. The source material's discussion of Bulgarian closed social-media communities, including the reported "Shkembe Chorba" ecosystem, is relevant here as a possible genealogy of exposure to gore and transgressive humour, although its scale and precise history require stronger documentation before being treated as established fact. The larger principle does not depend upon that particular group: the everyday environment shapes behaviour, and the everyday

environment is increasingly hybrid. The classroom may remain physical while prestige, belonging, humiliation, competition and identity are simultaneously organised elsewhere. What official institutions perceive as "online life" may, for adolescents themselves, simply be life.

This produces the central irony of the Plovdiv case. Traditional television once possessed sufficient cultural authority that broadcasting an atrocity could become a national scandal. The earlier Bulgarian controversy surrounding graphic Chechnya footage illustrates a period when control of the screen meant control of mass visibility. A quarter-century later, the screen has multiplied into millions of privately controlled devices. The young audience does not need television to show forbidden material because television no longer controls access to the forbidden. The migration can be expressed almost schematically: from the television studio to the website, from the website to the closed group, from the closed group to the encrypted or semi-private channel, and finally from consuming violent content to possessing the technological capacity to produce and distribute it. This is the point at which the medieval-square analogy becomes more than metaphor. Public punishment historically required the simultaneous presence of sinner, executioner and crowd. Networked media reunite these roles in technologically transformed form. The accused becomes the sinner; the vigilante appoints himself investigator, judge and executioner; the smartphone creates the square; and the dispersed audience supplies recognition. Yet the digital version adds something historically unprecedented: the performers themselves can watch the audience watching them. Views, reactions, reposts and comments transform spectatorship into feedback.

Youth Hill should therefore not be presented as proof that an algorithm "caused" a murder. Such technological determinism would weaken the argument. Its significance is more unsettling. It demonstrates the type of event that becomes possible when violent subcultural scripts, moral absolutism, portable broadcasting technology and economies of attention occupy the same environment. The Manufacture of Deviance 2.0 reaches its most dangerous stage when the distinction between representing atrocity and producing atrocity begins to collapse. At that point the victim is no longer merely someone whose suffering happens to have been recorded. Human suffering itself risks becoming the performance.

Conclusion: If There Is a Righteous Cause, Everything Is Permitted: The Children Are Watching

The killing on Youth Hill should finally be understood not simply as an isolated criminal episode, nor as proof that social media mechanically transform adolescents into murderers, but as a symptom through which something about the surrounding culture becomes suddenly visible. There is a dangerous temptation whenever children or teenagers commit extreme violence to describe them as incomprehensible anomalies: monsters inexplicably appearing inside an otherwise normal society. Culture has repeatedly offered a more disturbing interpretation. Carlos Saura's Cría Cuervos (1976), Michael Haneke's The White Ribbon (2009), and, further back, Henrik Ibsen's Ghosts (1881) can be read as a loose thematic trilogy about intergenerational trauma, concealed transgression and the decay of authoritarian patriarchal worlds. They differ radically in form and historical setting, but each refuses the comforting assumption that children inhabit an innocent universe separated from adult corruption. The children already know. They hear what adults imagine has been concealed, observe what institutions refuse to acknowledge and reproduce behaviours whose origins

precede them. The “ghosts” inherited by the next generation are therefore not necessarily supernatural beings. They are patterns of domination, violence, hypocrisy and secrecy transmitted through the everyday environment.

Cría Cuervos is particularly relevant because Saura places childhood inside the decomposing domestic world of late Francoism. Ana does not exist outside the violence, sexuality, death, resentment and authoritarianism of the adult world surrounding her. She observes it, misunderstands parts of it, fantasises about it and reproduces its logic within her own imaginative universe. The title itself, derived from the Spanish proverb cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos—raise ravens and they will peck out your eyes—contains an appropriate warning for the digital age. A society raises its children within an environment and later expresses astonishment when that environment becomes visible through them. Haneke’s The White Ribbon makes the argument even more disturbing. Its children inhabit a rigid German Protestant community governed by punishment, repression, hierarchy, humiliation and concealed abuse immediately before the First World War. Mysterious acts of cruelty begin appearing throughout the village, yet the film refuses the reassuring simplicity of locating evil within one uniquely monstrous individual. Violence appears instead as something cultivated by an environment. The children learn the grammar of domination spoken by the adults and return it to society in another form. The implication is historical as well as psychological: an authoritarian culture may be manufacturing the generation that will subsequently reproduce and radicalise its violence.

Ibsen’s Ghosts provides the deeper genealogy of the same idea. The supposedly respectable household survives through concealment. What one generation refuses to confront does not disappear; it returns through the next. This offers an important correction to the language commonly used after contemporary youth atrocities. Society asks: Where did these children learn this? The question often presupposes that the surrounding culture was healthy until some alien internet influence entered it. The more uncomfortable question is what the digital environment has revealed about tendencies already present within society. Online networks do not create aggression, sexuality, tribalism, humiliation, sadism or the desire for belonging ex nihilo. They provide environments in which such impulses can find communities, symbols, ideological justifications, audiences and currencies. The smartphone becomes simultaneously mirror and amplifier.

This is why the genealogy from traditional television to closed groups, gore communities, Telegram channels, TikTok performances and violent vigilante subcultures matters. The contrast with the earlier Bulgarian television scandal is striking. Graphic footage once passing accidentally or irresponsibly through a national broadcaster could produce widespread outrage precisely because the broadcaster remained a central cultural gatekeeper. The contemporary teenager requires no such gatekeeper. Forbidden images circulate through networks that parents, teachers, broadcasters and public institutions may never enter. The material assembled for this study describes precisely this displacement of youth culture towards semi-private digital environments in which transgressive material can acquire prestige as evidence of fearlessness, belonging or resistance to conventional morality. The most consequential transformation occurs when the young user ceases to be merely the consumer of this economy and discovers that the same device can make him its producer. Here the argument returns to the title. The Manufacture of Deviance 2.0 does not describe a secret organisation manufacturing atrocities according to a central plan. It describes an environment capable of manufacturing incentives

for transgression. The economy involved is larger than money. Bitcoin, subscriptions, donations and advertising revenue matter, but so do attention, followers, notoriety, recognition, group status and belonging. The medieval crowd rewarded spectacle with physical presence and excitement; the digital crowd possesses likes, shares, comments, reposts, subscriptions and metrics. The scaffold has acquired an analytics dashboard. Cruelty can discover immediately whether cruelty is performing well.

The vigilante "pedophile hunter" phenomenon adds the final and perhaps most dangerous ingredient: moral absolutism. Violence becomes easier to perform when the victim has first been linguistically transformed into absolute evil. The label precedes the punishment. The source material surrounding the Plovdiv case is particularly important here because it records that the accusation directed towards the victim must not be confused with a judicially established fact. Once accusation itself becomes sufficient, however, the self-appointed hunter can simultaneously become prosecutor, judge, executioner, cameraman and distributor. This is where the famous proposition commonly associated with Dostoevsky can be provocatively reversed. The greatest danger may not always arise when there is no God and therefore everything is permitted. History repeatedly demonstrates the opposite danger: If there is God, everything is permitted—provided "God" means an unquestionable righteous cause. Protect the children. Save the nation. Destroy the enemy. Purify society. Once the cause becomes absolutely Good and the opponent absolutely Evil, torture can be renamed justice and humiliation can become entertainment. The progression examined throughout this article can therefore be expressed as a disturbing genealogy of media economics: Manufacture of Consent → Manufacture of Dissent → Manufacture of Deviance → Manufacture of Atrocity. This is not an inevitable technological sequence, but it identifies an escalation potential embedded within an economy in which increasingly scarce attention continuously searches for increasingly exceptional stimuli. The ultimate taboo is no longer pornography, profanity or political extremism. It is the real suffering and destruction of the human body.

Cría Cuervos and The White Ribbon offer an appropriate warning with which to end. When children begin publicly reproducing the hidden violence, symbols and transgressions circulating through their society, the simplest explanation is to blame the children. The more disturbing possibility is that they are showing the adults something about the world that raised them. Youth Hill may therefore be read not merely as the location of a crime but as a terrible mirror. The medieval scaffold has returned without the scaffold, the executioner without official appointment and the crowd without physical presence. The town square now fits inside a smartphone. And when a society discovers its children standing in that square, filming suffering and performing violence for an invisible audience, it should not ask only what has happened to its children. It must ask what kind of society they have been watching.

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